

Pioneers of Alienation: The Transformations

Johnny met thingaholics making their endless rounds. J. Zeus Murphy's Zombie Crypt, the Nofrillies, the Damnation Army, even Johnny's Thing Store....

He met Jose Ferreira. He'd been loitering at Thing and Dung when somebody behind him surprised him, demanding in a rough bum's voice what he was doing. He slowly turned around giving himself time to formulate an elegant retort like fuck yourself, cock sucker, but it was only Jose Ferreira. In a baseball cap.

It took Johnny a few seconds to remember. O, yes. He was on his way to the post office in the Psych-O-Farm-A-C, to mail copies of his book to editors in the U.S.A., to ream their ass-holes with. Johnny was solicitous of editorial holes; he sent them bum-fodder.

Jose Ferreira said he was on his way to the NoFrillies, to buy milk. Johnny offered to walk him to the next corner. They took in the scenery. Everywhere Johnny looked, junkies and loonies. He recognized them. He wasn't one of them. He was both....

Degenerate punks in gangster suits tormented a fat drag queen. She followed them. She begged. She pleaded. She offered them free ciggies to see their cocks. Just once! A carton....

Smokes for strokes for blokes for jokes....

She was especially interested in a big strapping stock-boy from the Nofrillies. He had a handsome mug, a fresh crew-cut, and he knew it....

Shoppers squeezed through the turnstile with yellow Nofrillies bags they paid five cents for because there were no frills at the Nofrillies. The bags bulged with cans of tomato soup and tomato juice and hamburger in styrofoam trays wrapped in plastic.

An old woman in sun-glasses and a dirty track-suit blocked their path. She asked them for a quarter.

Nobody gave her one.

Johnny was nattering about the next recession, before he was out of this one. He could buy a computer with a word-processing program already installed for five dollars at the Cripp's. Even J. Zeus Murphy's Zombie Crypt Store couldn't beat that. If you knew the right things they'd give you the computer and five dollars to take it away.

Johnny said he was getting worried. Apart from the next recession his money was running out.

Not a cute student anymore. Old, and broke!

Johnny's friend said he should consider teaching.

Johnny started to laugh so hard, he'd come. He and The Leash, Dr. Ulysses S. Dogleish, Emeritus Registrar of Cartoon U, benefactor of madkind, etc., weren't so different....

In that night where all the methane smells the same. Like stale old farts, that is....

The Leash, staggering down Thing Street. Writing biographies in his stunning Great Bursars and Pedagogues series. A bum approaches, enquiring about his latest book. The Leash staggers. He raises a palsied claw in the general direction of thought's last known